

## Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6589

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0128

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO, US, UNSC, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER -- UNSC AND MIDDLE EAST  
STRATEGY

REF: AMMAN 0117

1. I SAW RIFAI ABOUT NOON JANUARY 10 FOLLOWING MY RETURN.  
I PROVIDED HIM WITH INFORMATION ORALLY FROM TALKING POINTS  
WHICH YOU HAD AUTHORIZED. I READ HIM PARAS 6 AND 7 VERBATIM.

2. RIFAI EXPRESSED SOME GENERAL DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT OUR  
INABILITY TO FURTHER TOWARD THE ARAB POSITION. HE  
RECOUNTED THAT WHEN HE HAD GONE TO DAMASCUS LAST  
WEEKEND THE SYRIAN POSITION HAD BEEN EXCEPTIONALLY TOUGH.  
THEY HAD TALKED OF A RESOLUTION WITH A LONG AND ACRIMONIOUS  
ANTI-IRAELI PREAMBLE FOLLOWED BY THREE TOUGH SUBSTANTIVE  
SECTIONS -- FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WITHIN SIX MONTHS;  
ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE WITHIN  
ONE YEAR; UN SECRETARY GENERAL TO REPORT BACK ON PROGRESS  
AND UNSC TO MEET AGAIN TO CONSIDER RESULTS. RIFAI FELT  
FROM THE ARAB POINT OF VIEW IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY FOR  
JORDAN TO SEEK MODIFICATION OF THIS APPROACH. IN THAT  
CONNECTION SYRIANS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT AROUND TO AGREE WITH  
JORDAN ON FOUR PRINCIPLES AS THE BASIS FOR A RESOLUTION,  
TEXT OF WHICH WOULD BE DRAFTED IN NEW YORK -- TOTAL

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ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 LINES, RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN

RIGHTS INCLUDING RETURN, COMPENSATION, SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENT STATE; COMMITMENT TO PEACE BY ALL STATES IN THE AREA, INCLUDING BOTH RECOGNITION AND SECURE BORDERS FOR ALL OTHER RELATED POINTS IN UNSC RES 242; AND A MOVE TO GENEVA OR OTHER ACCEPTABLE FORUM. REGARDING LAST "PRINCIPLE", RIFAI SAID THEY WERE OPEN TO DIFFERENT IDEAS SUCH AS POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF GENEVA, NEW MEMBERS AND SO FORTH.

3. RIFAI ASKED WHETHER WE WOULD VETO OR ABSTAIN ON THEIR PROPOSED RESOLUTION. I TOLD RIFAI THAT MY INSTRUCTIONS WERE CLEAR AND REPEATED FOR HIM THAT FROM WHAT WE UNDERSTAND IS THE PRESENT SYRIAN THINKING, WHICH PARALLELED WHAT HE HAD JUST EXPLAINED, SUCH A DRAFT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO US AND WE WOULD HAVE TO OPPOSE IT. I TOLD HIM, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY WANT TO WAIT FOR A TEXT WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE IN OUR HANDS BEFORE WE COULD MAKE A DECISION.

4. RIFAI SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE DEBATE ITSELF MIGHT BE RELATIVELY SHORT -- PARTICULARLY SINCE ISRAELIS HE ASSUMED WERE STILL NOT GOING TO ATTEND. THERE MIGHT BE THREE DAYS OF DEBATE FOLLOWED BY PERHAPS UP TO SEVEN DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS AMONG SPONSORS, THE NONALIGNED AND THE EUROPEANS ON A FINAL TEXT. HE REPEATED AGAIN THERE IS NOW NO AGREED TEXT BETWEEN SYRIA AND JORDAN, ONLY AGREED PRINCIPLES.

5. ON FINAL PARAGRAPH OF MY TALKING POINTS, RIFAI SAID THAT HE THOUGHT IN ANY DISCUSSIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE THREUNDER, THERE WOULD BE RECOGNITION BY THE OTHER SIDE THAT THE US MOVE WAS A STEP FORWARD, BUT THAT THERE WOULD BE AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE FOR RECOGNITION, PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE EFFORTS AND SO FORTH. THE END RESULT WOULD BE DISAPPOINTMENT IF ONLY DISCUSSIONS WERE CONTEMPLATED. IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT QUESTION FROM ME AS TO GOJ REACTION TO SUCH A STEP IF WE WERE TO TAKE IT, HE SAID JORDAN HAD ASKED US TO DO SO IN THE PAST, AND WHILE THE OTHER SIDE MIGHT BE DISAPPOINTED IN OBVIOUSLY LIMITED MATTER OF WHAT WE PROPOSED, IT  
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WOULD INDEED BE A MOVE FORWARD

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6590

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 0128

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM THE AMBASSADOR

6. ON PARAGRAPH 6 OF MY INSTRUCTIONS, HE SAID JORDAN WOULD WANT TO WAIT AND SEE ABOUT A GENEVA CONFERENCE AND ITS ATTENDANCE THERE. HE WOULD NOT FORECLOSE ATTENDING IF THE COSTS OF STAYING AWAY WERE TOO HIGH. SIMILARLY, HE WOULD NOT WISH TO FORECLOSE JORDAN'S STAYING AWAY IF OTHER ARAB STATES PREFERRED THAT COURSE OF ACTION.

7. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SYRIANS NO LONGER SAW SECURITY COUNCIL AS A SUBSTITUTE FORUM FOR NEGOTIATION. THEY WERE READY AFTERWARD TO GO TO GENEVA, BUT SAW SECURITY COUNCIL AS A HELPFUL PRECURSOR IN SETTING STAGE FOR GENEVA. (THIS CONTRASTS MARKEDLY WITH WHAT KING HAS TOLD ME.)

8. RIFAI ASKED HOW US COULD POSSIBLY VETO SUCH PRINCIPLES AS TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS, A COMMITMENT TO PEACE, AND A MOVE TO GENEVA. I SAID WITHOUT SINGLING OUT ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT OUR REAL CONCERN WAS THAT A BASIC CHANGE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD IN ITSELF END THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS BY KEEPING THE ISRAELIS OUT. OUR POSITION WAS HINGED TO THIS PRINCIPLE. IN ADDITION, WE LOOKED TO WHAT COULD BE DONE BEYOND THE UNSC MEETING AS OF MORE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE TO US THAN WHAT WAS APPARENTLY INTENDED BY OTHERS TO TAKE PLACE THERE. THE SECURITY COUNCIL COULD NOT DICTATE TO THE PARTIES

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THE END POINT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. RIFAI THEN STRESSED

THE POSITION THAT SINCE THE ARAB PRINCIPLES ARE SO BROADLY ACCEPTABLE THE US COULD WELL BE SEVERLY ISOLATED AND EVEN US DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION MIGHT WONDER WHY THEUS WAS BLINDLY SUPPORTING ISRAEL IN THE FACE OF SUCH BROADLY UNDERSTOOD AND WIDELY ACCEPTABLE PRINCIPLES. HE THOUGHT THUS THE PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPACT OF THE ARAB POSITION WOULD BE EXTREMELY HELPFUL TO THE ARABS WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. TOO STRONG A RESOLUTION WOULD MAKE THE US POSITION ON THE VETO MUCH EASIER. A WEAK RESOLUTION FROM THE ARAB SIDE WOULD VITIATE ITS SUBSTANTIVE POSITION AND COULD POSSIBLY NOT BE ACHIEVED.

9. IN REPLY I TOLD RIFAI I WAS SURE HE AND OTHER ARABS WOULD KEEP IN MIND THE FACT THAT IF THEY TRIED TO HAVE A RHETORICAL FIELD DAY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE UNITED STATES ALONG THE LINES OF THE (ZIONISM-RACISM) RESOLUTION, THEY COULD WELL BEGIN TO LIMIT WHAT THE US COULD DO IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE POINT, BUT GAVE NO UNDERTAKING OR ASSURANCE THAT THE DEBATE WAS IN ANY WAY CONTROLLABLE, ASIDE FROM HIS STATEMENT ABOVE ABOUT THE SHORT PERIOD HE EXPECTED IT TO LAST.

10. I ASKED RIFAI ABOUT AN APPROACH TO EGYPT. HE SAID NO REPLY HAD YET BEEN RECEIVED FROM SADAT. IN ANY EVENT, HE WAS SENDING HIS UNCLE (ABDUL MUNEM RIFAI) AND HIS FATHER-IN-LAW (BAHJAT TALHOUNI) TO ATTEND AN ARAB GROUP MEETING IN CAIRO TO DECIDE ON WHETHER TO POSTPONE EC-ARAB DIALOGUE. THEY WOULD GO ON THE 15TH AND TRY TO TALK WITH SADAT THEN.  
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